

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 1, 2005. Claims 1 to 8, 10 and 12 are in the application, with Claims 9, 11 and 13 having been cancelled herein. Claims 1, 8, 10 and 12 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 12 was objected to for an informality. Additionally, Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Without conceding the correctness of the objection or the rejection, they are nonetheless believed to be rendered moot by amendments made herein. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and the § 112 rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,944,734 (Anzai). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to ejecting a detachable storage unit from an information processing apparatus. According to the invention, the storage unit stores user information, and when authentication information is received from the information processing apparatus, the storage unit performs an authentication process based on the stored user information and the input authentication information. A result of the authentication process is transmitted to the information processing apparatus, whereby the information processing apparatus controls a process to eject the storage unit.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 1 defines a storage unit detachable from an information processing apparatus, comprising storage means for storing user information for user authentication, authentication means for performing

authentication processing on the basis of authentication information input from an information processing apparatus in which the storage unit is mounted, and user information stored in the storage means, and output means for outputting an authentication result of the authentication means to the information processing apparatus, wherein the information processing apparatus performs a control process to eject the storage unit from the information processing apparatus based on the authentication result.

Amended independent Claim 8 is an information processing apparatus in which a storage unit is detachably mounted, wherein the storage unit comprises storage means for storing user information for user authentication, authentication means for performing authentication processing on the basis of authentication information input to the storage unit from the information processing apparatus in which the storage unit is mounted, and the user information stored in the storage means, and output means for outputting an authentication result of the authentication means to the information processing apparatus, and wherein the information processing apparatus comprises providing means for providing an interface for a user to input authentication information for executing predetermined processing for ejecting the storage unit from the information processing apparatus, transmission means for transmitting the authentication information input via the interface to the storage unit, reception means for receiving the authentication result output from the output means of the storage unit, and execution means for executing the predetermined processing for ejecting the storage unit from the information processing apparatus on the basis of the authentication result received by the reception means.

Amended independent Claims 10 and 12 are access method and computer medium claims, respectively, that include features substantially corresponding to Claims 1 and 8.

The applied reference is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of, an information processing apparatus having a detachable storage unit performing a predetermined process to eject the storage unit from an information processing apparatus on the basis of an authentication result received from the storage unit, where the storage unit obtains the authentication result by performing an authentication process based on user information stored in a storage medium of the storage unit and authentication information input to the storage unit from the information processing apparatus.

Anzai is directed to a storage apparatus that uses a password to control access to stored data such that “unauthorized access to user data stored in the user data storage region 20 can be prevented.” (column 7, lines 5 to 7). Specifically, under an access not-allow state, read and write commands issued to user data storage region 20 are denied. (column 9, lines 60 to 65). On the other hand, if a password transmitted from a host computer 3 matches a stored password, read and write access to user data storage region 20 is allowed. (column 10, lines 6 to 23).

In entering the rejection of Claim 2, the Office Action asserts that Anzai discloses notifying an information processing apparatus of eject permission when authentication by an authentication means is successful. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Contrary to the Office Action’s assertion, Anzai is seen to disclose controlling access to data based in part on a password. In particular, Anzai’s system “sends the entered password and the entered number of times used to the magneto-optical disk

apparatus so as to instruct a control unit of a drive for controlling data read/write operations.” (column 8, lines 42 to 45). However, Anzai’s controlling of read/write operations is not seen to disclose or to suggest anything regarding ejecting a storage unit, much less disclose or suggest notifying an information processing apparatus of eject permission when authentication by an authentication means is successful, as asserted by the Office Action. Likewise, Anzai fails to disclose or to suggest controlling ejection of a storage unit from an information processing apparatus on the basis of an authentication result. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 8, 10 and 12 are believed to be allowable.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Turning to a formal matter, the Office Action contends that the Information Disclosure Statement filed on December 12, 2003 (hereinafter “12/03 IDS”) fails to comply with 37 C.F.R § 1.98(a)(1). Applicants respectfully disagree and request that the Examiner consider the art cited therein. Specifically, Applicants note that the version of § 1.98 cited in the Office Action was not in effect at the time that the 12/03 IDS was filed. At the time that the 12/03 IDS was filed, the IDS was in full compliance with the revision of § 1.98. See MPEP Eighth Edition, First Revision (02/2003) § 609. Accordingly, the Office Action’s assertion that the 12/03 IDS fails to meet the requirements of § 1.98 is incorrect. As such, the Examiner is requested to indicate that the information cited in the

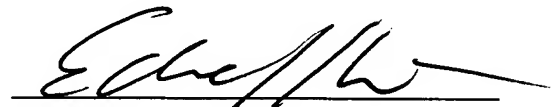
12/03 IDS has been considered by initialing "adjacent to the citation" and returning a copy of the initialed sheet with the next correspondence.

Additionally, the Examiner is respectfully requested to consider the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement dated October 29, 2003, and to return an initialed Form PTO-1449 for that IDS to indicate consideration of the art cited therein.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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